DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 023 RC 017 153

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TITLE Culture and Consciousness in the Chicano Community: An Empowerment Perspective.
PUB DATE Aug 88
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association (96th, Atlanta, GA, August 12-16, 1988). The data used in this paper were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Awareness; Cultural Images; Cultural Influences; Ethnicity; Ethnic Relations; Factor Analysis; *Group Unity; *Mexican Americans
IDENTIFIERS *Chicanos; *Empowerment

ABSTRACT

Theories of empowerment propose how individuals can increase their personal, interpersonal, and political power in order to take action to improve their lives. Empowerment requires development of a new self-concept composed of three mutually reinforcing cognitive components: (1) group identification; (2) stratum consciousness; and (3) self- and collective efficacy. This study investigates the initial development of empowerment in the Chicano community, which is composed of new immigrants and descendants of natives, English and Spanish speakers, and includes heritage- and nonheritage-oriented individuals. The empowerment process may be difficult to implement among Chicanos because of this heterogeneity. Ethnic identity is multidimensional and has two major dimensions, cultural and political. Factor and multiple classification analyses were conducted on data from the "Mexican Origin People in the United States: The 1979 Chicano Study" which drew a sample of 991 persons of Mexican descent living in the Southwest and in Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of the survey was to test three hypotheses: (1) social identity in Chicanos will take one of two forms, cultural or political; (2) cultural identity will be associated with immigrant status, Spanish dominance, lower education, and high ingroup/low outgroup contact; and (3) political identity will be associated with native born status, English dominance, higher education, and high ingroup/high outgroup contact. The first two hypotheses were supported by analyses of the data. Results of the study suggest that immigrant Chicanos may develop a sense of ethnic identity more readily and engage in the process of empowerment more easily than native born Chicanos. This paper contains 4 tables and 21 references. (ALL)

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Culture and Consciousness in the Chicano Community: An Empowerment Perspective

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96th Annual Conference
Atlanta, GA
August 1988

RC017153

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Abstract: The literature on empowerment assumes that a sense of group identity and consciousness are necessary for individuals to engage in efforts to change their situations. This paper explores this connection in respect to the Chicano community: to what degree do cultural conceptions of group identity enhance, or detract from, the development of a more political consciousness concerning group status? What are the implications for practitioners seeking to mobilize Chicano communities and improve community conditions? Data from the 1979 National Chicano Survey are used to explore these issues.

INTRODUCTION

Theories of empowerment propose how individuals can increase their personal, interpersonal, and political power so that they can take action to improve their lives. Described in this manner, empowerment has become an increasingly popular concept in the social work, community psychology, and health care fields. Within these fields, empowerment is presented as a means for addressing the problems of powerless populations and for mediating the role powerlessness plays in creating and perpetuating social problems (Fagan, 1979; Friere, 1973; Solomon, 1976).

The literature on empowerment describes it as a psychological transformation which requires the development of a new self concept (Friere, 1973; Kieffer, 1984). A combination of feelings of shared identity and shared fate with a group of like others, with the belief that actions toward change will be effective comprise the core of psychological empowerment. This sense of self can be broken down into these three cognitive components which are mutually reinforcing :

Group Identification, which provides the basis for empowerment. Elements of group identification include understanding areas of common experience and concern, a preference for members of the ingroup, and feelings of shared fate (Garcia, 1982; Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980);

Stratum Consciousness, which involves a realistic appraisal of the status and power of groups in society. For members of oppressed groups, can lead to

feelings of relative deprivation, power discontent, and system blame for personal problems. This is a means for drawing connections between personal problems and political conditions (Gurin, et. al. , 1980; Klein, 1984);

Self and Collective Efficacy, which refer to beliefs that one is capable as an individual or member of a group, of making desired changes in one's life (Bandura, 1982). In the literature on empowerment, this is described as perceiving oneself as a subject, rather than object, who is capable of working to change the social order (Fay, 1987; Friere, 1973).

In this model the tie between efficacy and empowerment is clear: individuals and groups which believe in their ability to affect change will be more apt to make successful efforts to increase their power. The role of group identification and consciousness is less apparent, but crucial. In order for individuals and groups to understand that their problems stem from a lack of power they must first comprehend the distribution of power in society and how it affects them.

Research on empowerment is in its infancy. The purpose of this study was to begin to investigate its development in the Chicano community. Chicanos, people of Mexican descent, are a rapidly expanding and heterogeneous segment of the American population. This group includes new immigrants and descendents of some of the original inhabitants of this continent; it includes English and Spanish speakers; and it includes people who identify closely with their heritage and those who do not (Moore & Pachon, 1985; Portes & Truelove, 1987). This heterogeneity suggests that the empowerment process, which is based on the development of a sense of group identification and consciousness, may be difficult to attain with Chicanos.

Research on Chicanos has found that ethnic identity is multidimensional and related to such factors as language dominance, recency of migration, cultural practices, phenotype and minority consciousness. Many studies have consistently identified two major forms of identity: one based in cultural

conceptions of the group and the other based on political conceptions (Portes, 1984; Keefe & Padilla, 1987). In relation to empowerment, Cultural Identity is similar to Group Identification, while Political Identity resembles Stratum Consciousness.

Literature on ethnic identity suggests that different combinations of ingroup and outgroup contact can have a powerful effect (Gurin & Epps, 1975; Tajfel, 1981). Individuals with extensive and intimate contact with other Chicanos have been found to identify strongly with their ethnic group (Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Rodriguez, 1986). This type of contact provides a forum for perceiving commonality, for reinforcing and sharing cultural practices, and for counteracting the negative effects of ethnic stereotypes.

In contrast, a combination of ingroup and outgroup contact may be necessary for the development of stratum consciousness. Some outgroup contact will contribute to feelings of relative deprivation and will provide information about the status and power of other groups (Crosby, 1982; Tajfel, 1981). It will also provide the opportunity for critical incidents which can make group membership and status salient (Clayton & Crosby, 1987; Gurin & Brim, 1984). However, close contact with ingroup members, especially group discussions about status or in the context of group conflict, may also be necessary for perceiving a sense of common fate and system blame (Crosby & Hereck, 1987).

If these types of ingroup/outgroup contact are critical elements in the empowerment process, different subgroups within the Chicano community may engage in this process differently. Immigrant Chicanos, who are often Spanish dominant and have less education, are likely to live and work under conditions involving high ingroup contact. Conversely, native born Chicanos, who are speak

English fluently and who have more education, are more likely to have greater contact with Anglos. This suggests that native born Chicanos will be more apt to develop the stratum consciousness necessary for empowerment.

The proposed model for empowerment in the Chicano community is as follows. Chicanos with an ethnic identity are most apt to center their identity around either cultural or political concerns. Cultural identity is focused on the ingroup - its practices and values. Political identity is focused on the outgroup and issues of power differences and discrimination. It is proposed that these forms of identity arise from different intergroup relationships between Chicanos and the larger society.

From this discussion, the following hypotheses were generated for analyses:

1. Social identity in Chicanos will take one of two forms: cultural identity or political identity;

2. Cultural identity will be associated with immigrant status, Spanish dominance, lower education, and high ingroup/low outgroup contact;

3. Political identity will be associated with native born status, English dominance, higher education, and high ingroup/high outgroup contact.

METHOD

Data for these analysis came from "Mexican Origin People in the United States: The 1979 Chicano Survey," conducted by a research team at the University of Michigan Survey Research Center[1]. This survey drew a sample of 991 persons of Mexican descent living in the Southwest and Chicago, Illinois. These areas contain almost 90% of the total U.S. Chicano population. The survey was conducted in Spanish or English, depending on the respondent's

preference with a response rate of 70%. Items cover such topics as psychological functioning, ethnic identification and consciousness, work history, family composition and values, and the use of health and mental health services. It is the most comprehensive survey on Chicanos conducted to date.

Three analyses were conducted: a factor analysis, was carried out to test the hypotheses regarding the structure of social identity and multiple classification analyses with the purpose of looking at the development of these different forms of identity.

RESULTS

Factor analysis

This analysis used a principal components analysis with both a varimax and an oblique rotation, as total orthogonality might not be a realistic assumption. However, both the varimax and oblique rotation yielded similar results, therefore the varimax rotation will be the focus of interpretation.

Results

Fourteen variables measuring different aspects of Chicano identity were selected to be the basis of this analysis. They included variables related to political beliefs concerning Chicanos and cultural beliefs and values which have been found to be associated with the Chicano community. Twelve of the variables measured attitudes toward the group or toward family relationships, while two measured actual behaviors.

The principal components analysis resulted in six variables which explained 58% of the total variance. The determinent R of .2091037 indicated that complete covariation of variables was not a problem. Communality scores

showed a level adequate for further analysis. A criterion of .30 was selected to determine with which factor to place variables following the varimax rotation.

This analysis resulted in six factors, of which three - Cultural Behavior, Cultural Preference, an Political Beliefs - involve at least 18% of the common variance (Table 1). These three together resemble the cultural and political identities found in previous literatures.

This supports the first hypothesis, that among Chicanos both a Cultural and a Political Ethnic identity exist. In order to test the remaining hypotheses the results of this factor analysis were used to form indices for further analyses. Cultural Identity, was formed consisting of factor three. These attitudinal variables were selected, rather than Cultural Behavior, because they represent a conscious preference for Mexican Culture. Political Identity was formed from factor four plus Perceived Power-Excluded to represent an element of power discontent. These indices were then entered into Multiple Classification Analyses with variables on language, immigrant status, education, and group contact as predictors.

Multiple Classification Analysis

The first two MCA analyses tested the following models:

Cultural Identity = Low Education + Immigrant Status + Low Anglo/ High Chicano Contact + Spanish Dominant

Political Identity = Higher Education + US Born + High Anglo/ High Chicano Contact + English Dominant

The dependant variables were measured by the scales developed from the factor analysis. Education, immigrant/native status, and language were measured by non-continuous categorical variables. Anglo/Chicano contact was

measured by a pattern variable generated from two items, one measuring the number of Chicano friends, the other measuring the amount of contact with Anglos. Therefore the form of ingroup contact is intimate, there was not corresponding variable for Anglo contact. Bivariate statistics indicated that relationships existed between the predictors: Immigrants tended to have lower levels of education and to be Spanish dominant as well as having less contact with Anglos. Therefore, a second set of analyses was done which controlled for these interactions.

The first analysis supports the model for the development of Cultural Identity (Table 2). The $R^2_{adj.}$ indicates that 12% of the variation in cultural identity can be accounted for by this model. The entire model and each predictor were significant at the .01% level. The rank ordering of Beta statistics indicates that Anglo/Chicano contact (B=.19) was the most significant predictor, followed by Language (B=.11), Education (B=.10), and Nativity (B=.09).

The highest scores on Cultural Identity were from those with high Chicano contact, the lowest scores from those with low Chicano contact. Respondents with high Chicano and Low Anglo contact had the highest scores (31.76), those with low Chicano and High Anglo contact had the lowest scores (28.63). The other predictors were also in the expected direction: Spanish speaking, Mexican born, and poorly educated (<6th grade) respondents had stronger cultural identities, however in some cases the difference was not very large. Overall, this data supports the proposed model for the development of Cultural Identity, although it demonstrates the fact that the model is not complete.

The model of Political Identity accounted for only 7% of the variance in Political Identity, suggesting that the model was insufficiently specified (Table

3). Beta statistics show that Anglo/Chicano Contact (B=.15) was the most significant predictor, followed by Education (B=.11), Language (B=.08), and Nativity (B=.01). In relation to Anglo/Chicano Contact, high Anglo contact was associated with weaker Political Identity and low Anglo contact was associated with stronger Political Identity. Those highest in Political Identity were those with high Chicano contact and low Anglo contact. Those lowest in Political Identity were those with low Chicano contact and high Anglo contact. The remaining predictors were also in the unexpected direction: respondents with more education, who spoke English, and who were born in the U.S. had less Political Identity. The entire model and each predictor were significant at the .01% level.

Based on these results, a third set of analyses was done to control for the interrelationship between the independent variables (Table 4). As intergroup contact is the predictor of greatest concern, the sample was broken down into two subsamples: English Speaking/Native Born and Spanish Speaking/Immigrant. For each of these samples group contact was the independent variable predicting Cultural Identity and Political Identity.

These results amplify those found in the other model. Immigrants overall had higher scores on Cultural Identity. For the Native born population, 7% of the variance of Cultural Identity is accounted for by group contact. The main effect is Chicano contact, with high Chicano contact associated with higher scores. For the immigrant population only 1% of the variance is accounted for by contact, this suggests that other factors are much more important. The only category with substantially lower scores were those with low Chicano and High Anglo contact. This pattern of results indicates that contact is more significant in

influencing Cultural Identity among native born Chicanos.

On average, immigrants had higher scores for Political Identity than native born Chicanos, except in the condition of Lo Chicano/Hi Anglo contact. The differences in scores are not as great as with Cultural Identity. For the native born, English speaking Chicanos contact accounts for 2% of the variance in Political Identity. Having high Chicano/lo Anglo contact is the main effect. For the immigrants, only .07% of the variance in Political Identity is accounted for by this model.The main effect was lo Chicano/hi Anglo contact, as these individuals who are immersed in the dominant society had the lowest scores.

INTERPRETATION

Taking each hypothesis separately the following patterns of results emerge:

1. Social identity in Chicanos will take one of two forms: cultural identity or political identity:

Data from the factor analysis confirmed this hypothesis. Two distinct forms of identity emerged from the data, each of which represented a different conception of the group. Cultural identity consisted of a preference for Spanish Language Media, a desire to live close to extended family members, and the wish that children carry on Mexican traditions. Political Identity consisted of beliefs that Chicano's are discriminated against, that social forces influence the status of the group, and endorsements of collective efforts for change. Due to the limitations of the data, it was not possible to measure how central these beliefs were to the self.

2. Cultural identity will be associated with high Chicano and low Anglo contact, immigrant status, Spanish dominance, and less education:

Data from the first and second MCAs confirmed this hypothesis as well. The

highest scores on Cultural Identity were for those individuals reporting high, intimate, Chicano contact and low Anglo contact. Immigrants, Spanish speakers, and those with less education had higher scores as well.

The MCA controlling for the interrelationship between education, nativity, and language found that the main effect is high ingroup contact. Even in the presence of Anglo contact, high scores prevailed. This supports the theory that close, and intimate, involvement with the ingroup is associated with an identification with the group's culture and values. For these individuals, the focus on appreciating cultural values may be a means of insulating oneself from the negative valuations of the Anglo society.

3. Political identity will be associated with high Chicano and high Anglo contact, individuals first generation and beyond, higher education, and English dominance:

This hypothesis was not supported by both MCA analyses. Those high in Political Identity were similar to those high in Cultural Identity. In the second MCA, hi Chicano and Lo Anglo contact were associated with the highest scores for both groups. This suggests that individuals who are more immersed in their group are more politicized.

The low R^2 for this model (.07) also suggests that other factors are more significant in the formation of political identity. The literature on empowerment suggests that these could include critical incidents, participation in social movements, personality factors, and experiences which would make status differentials salient. Therefore, although this hypothesis was not supported, the results provide a means for gaining further understanding of political identity and what it can require.

Returning to the model for empowerment, these results suggest that immigrant Chicanos may develop a sense of ethnic identity more readily than native born Chicanos. Therefore, they may engage in the process of empowerment more easily. Unless they are immersed in a Chicano community, the empowerment of native born Chicanos may require some deliberate intervention.

NOTE:

1.The data utilized in this paper were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data for MEXICAN ORIGIN PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES: THE 1979 CHICANO SURVEY were originally collected by Carlos H. Arce of the University of Michigan Survey Research Center. Neither the collector of the original data nor the Consortium bear any responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

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TABLE ONE

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor One: Cultural Behavior	Loading	Factor Two Perceived Power	Loading
Observed Consumable Culture	.80	Power-excluded	-.74
Observed Decorative Culture	.80	Power-vocal	-.74
18% Common Variance		16% Common Variance	
Factor Three Cultural Preference		**Factor Four** Family Roles	
Keep Traditions	-.81	Children's Roles	-.71
Proximal Familism	-.43	Marital Roles	-.56
Media Preference	-.73	14% Common Variance	
18% Common Variance			
Factor Five Political Beliefs		**Factor Six** Social Identity	
System Blame	-.71	Ethno-political	-.77
Mexican Discrimination	-.77	Mexican traditional	-.70
Separatist Ideology	-.46		
Civic Participation	-.32		
20% Common Variance		15% Common Variance	

TABLE TWO

Predicting Cultural Identity

Mean= 30.950 Multiple R^2_{adj}= .12 F= 14.20 (p<.001)

Category	N	%	Coefficient	Adj. Mean	Beta	Eta sq.	P
Education:							
1. <6	251	26.5	1.077	32.02	.10	.07	<.001
2. 6th	105	11.1	-1.206	29.74			
3. 7-9th	183	19.3	-0.185	30.76			
4. 10-11th	92	9.7	0.432	31.83			
5. 12th	151	15.9	-0.064	30.88			
6. >12	164	17.3	-0.854	30.09			
Language:							
1. English	462	48.8	-0.67	30.28	.11	.07	<.001
2. Español	484	51.1	0.64	31.59			
Nativity:							
1. U.S.	583	61.6	-0.438	30.51	.09	.05	<.001
2. Mexico	363	38.4	0.704	31.65			
Contact:							
0.Lo in/out	41	4.33	-1.673	29.27	.19	.07	<.001
1.Hi in/lo out	338	35.73	0.811	31.76			
2.Lo in/hi out	164	17.34	-2.318	28.63			
3.Hi in/Hi out	403	42.6	0.433	31.38			

Measured on a scale 10-40; 40=strong Cultural Identity

TABLE THREE

Predicting Political Identity

Mean= 38.76 Multiple R^2_{adj}= .07 F= 7.97 (p<.001)

Category	N	%	Coefficient	Adj. Mean	Beta	Eta sq.	P
Education:							
1. <6	244	26.15	0.970	39.73	.11	.05	<.001
2. 6th	101	10.83	-0.078	38.68			
3. 7-9th	182	19.51	-0.593	38.17			
4. 10-11th	92	9.85	0.225	38.99			
5. 12th	150	16.08	-0.704	38.06			
6. >12	164	17.58	-0.220	38.54			
Language:							
1. English	460	49.3	-0.479	38.28	.08	.04	<.001
2. Español	473	50.7	0.466	39.23			
Nativity:							
1. U.S.	578	61.9	-0.058	38.70	.01	.02	<.001
2. Mexico	355	38.1	0.095	38.86			
Contact:							
0.Lo in & out	43	4.6	0.288	39.05	.15	.05	<.001
1.Hi in/lo out	331	35.48	0.952	39.72			
2.Lo in/hi out	163	17.47	-1.673	37.09			
3.Hi in & out	396	42.44	-0.138	38.62			

On a scale, 10-50; 50=strong Political Identity

TABLE FOUR

Predicting Cultural Identity

	N	Native Born	N	Immigrant
0. Lo Chicano/Lo Anglo	15	24.248	19	32.543
1. Hi Chicano/Lo Anglo	60	30.339	196	33.053
2. Lo Chicano/Hi Anglo	117	27.046	17	29.511
3. Hi Chicano/Hi Anglo	233	30.220	97	33.020
Eta^2 p<.05	.07	p<.001		.01

Mean Scores; Scale ranging from 10-40

Predicting Political Identity

	N	U.S. Born	N	Immigrant
0. Lo Chicano/Lo Anglo	17	37.148	19	40.129
1. Hi Chicano/Lo Anglo	58	39.405	191	40.562
2. Lo Chicano/Hi Anglo	118	37.556	17	37.549
3. Hi Chicano/Hi Anglo	231	37.331	94	39.944
Eta^2	.02	p<.01	.007	p<.10

Mean Scores; Scale ranging from 10-50